THE WEEKLY MAGAZINE

CHRISTMAS ISSUE

JAZZ INFORMATION

VOL. I, No. 15 DECEMBER 22, 1939 TEN CENTS

HOT RECORD SOCIETY ISSUES ALBUM OF WOLVERINE RECORDS WITH BIX

Five rare Beiderbeckes, repressed from Gennett originals, will be released this week by the Hot Record Society in an album titled: "Young Man With A Horn; Bix and the Wolverines".

Two sides, "Davenport Blues" and "Toddlin' Blues", were made by Bix and his Rhythm Jugglers, featuring Tommy Dorsey, Paul Mertz, Don Murray, Howdy Quickwell and Tom Gargano.

The other eight sides were made by the Wolverines Orchestra, the band in which Bix began his career in the early twenties. The titles include "Fidgety Feet", "Jazz Me Blues", "Oh Baby", "Tiger Rag", "Sensation", "Tia Juana", "Big Boy", and "Royal Garden Blues".

With the new reissues, all of the records Bix made with the Wolverines some fifteen years ago are again available, with the exception of two sides. "Riverboat Shuffle" and "Lazy Daddy" had been previously issued by the H.R.S., and "Copenhagen" is available on U.H.C.A.

A booklet on the records, prepared by Charles Edward Smith, will be released with the album.

FRANKIE NEWTON AT KELLY'S STABLE

Frankie Newton brings his trumpet and seven-piece band to Kelly's Stable tonight (December 22) for two weeks. He replaces Hot Lips Page, who is following his two-week run at Kelly's with a series of one-nighters.

The Harlem Highlanders continue to share the bandstand at the Stable, and Billie Holiday may possibly be featured vocalist during Newton's appearance there.

Page's band at Kelly's included: Henry "Buster" Smith, alto; L. C. "Old Folks" Grimes, sax and clarinet; Samuel "Panama" Davis, saxes; James "Run-Johnny-Run" Reynolds, piano; Abe "Whiskey" Bolar, bass; Harold "Doc" West, drums; and Hot Lips Page, trumpet.

Next band booked into the 51st Street spot is Wingy Mannone, who is scheduled to open January 5th.

New York

Joe Marsala, still at the Fiesta, has dropped his rhythm section. Art Hodes, Jack Goss and Earl Murphy are out, with Sid Weiss in on bass and Joe Bushkin jumping back

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FREEMAN OFF FIFTH AVENUE

Bud Freeman and the Summa Cum Laude Orchestra, who were to open Wednesday (December 20) at the 7-11 Bar, did not. Plans for booking the band at the Fifth Avenue spot have fallen through entirely. The 7-11 continues its former policy of no cabaret entertainment.

Dave Tough did, however, leave Jack Teagarden's orchestra to join Freeman, and will drum in the band when bookings are obtained.

MUGGSY SPANIER WITH TED LEWIS

Muggsy Spanier, cornetist whose Ragtime Band left Nick's December 10, will play in Ted Lewis' orchestra.

Muggsy, who was a member of the Lewis band for several years, told Jazz Information that his band has not broken up. "I'm going to play with Lewis for a few weeks," he said. "Then I'll go back to my band, and we'll get bookings."

A vaudeville tour contract is still in sight for Spanier's band.

COLUMBIA INTRODUCES NEW JAZZ LABEL

The Columbia Recording Corporation this week introduced a special classification for its best recorded jazz. In the future, new and standard tunes waxed by Columbia's important swing groups will be released on the fifty-cent red label under the name "Jazz Masterworks".

The first of these special releases, Harry James' "Avalon" and "Ciribiribin", is already available. Six more were issued this week, including two piano-bass duets by Duke Ellington and Jimmy Blanton as well as couplings by the Goodman Sextet and the Basie, Teagarden, Goodman and Krupa orchestras.

No announcement has been made concerning the permanent catalogue of jazz classics, including reissues of old records by Armstrong, Bessie Smith, Henderson, Nichols, and others, which was to be issued by Columbia.

Also released this week, but on the Vocalion "race" list, was the first coupling by Ida Cox and her All Star Band, featuring Hot Lips Page, J. C. Higginbotham, Edmund Hall, Fletcher Henderson, Charlie Christian, Artie Bernstein and Lionel Hampton. The titles are "Take Him Off My Mind" and "Pink Slip Blues".

IDA COX JOINS CAFE SOCIETY SHOW; BIG BILL, SONNY TERRY ALSO THERE

Joe Sullivan, Boogie Woogie Boys Also Featured At Cafe

Ida Cox, blues singer of Paramount recording fame, began a long-promised run at Cafe Society, New York, on Thursday (December 21).

Simultaneously her first record in many years was issued by Vocalion.

Big Bill Broonzy, blues singer well known through his records, and Sonny Terry, half-blind harmonica player, open at the Cafe Tuesday, following their appearance at the "Spirituals To Swing" concert at Carnegie Hall, Christmas Eve. Miss Cox is also to appear at the concert.

Continuing at Cafe Society also are Joe Sullivan's band, Albert Ammons, Meade "Lux" Lewis, Pete Johnson, Joe Turner, and Hazel Scott. Jimmy Hoskins, drummer who played in Ammons' band in Chicago, is now accompanying the boogie woogie trio.

On Monday nights the Cafe still features James P. Johnson with his band, which includes Joe Thomas on trumpet, Bobby Sands, sax, and Yank Porter, drums.

Chicago

The unprepossessing guitar player down at the Three Deuces in Chicago with Baby Dodds is undoubtedly one of the greatest one-string guitarists today, and very formidable as an all-time wonder. As he picks out the blues on his guitar or kicks "China Boy" around Lonnie looks somewhere between 30 and 35. Actually he was born in 1899.

His style combines the youthful fervor of a young man and the deep understanding of the older man. When he plays the blues, which he does on occasion for forty-five minutes or more, you can't help feeling for what he plays. A truly great musician, who has been too long unappreciated, Johnson has recorded with Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington, Eddie Lang, the Chocolate Dandies, the Mills Blue Rhythm Band, and profusely by himself.

Lonnie was brought up in music; both his father and mother, as well as eleven brothers and sisters, were musical. He learned to play the violin, and even today is a marvelous violin player. He recorded with his violin, and loved it. One day he was wandering around New Orleans when he saw a guitar, and

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JAZZ INFORMATION

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COLLECTORS' ITEMS

Merrill M. Hammond, Jr., Worcester, Mass., has brought up an interesting question concerning some quite uncommon Gennett records. These are four sides by the Original Memphis Melody Boys: "Make A Monkey Out Of Me" (11380) -- "Wonderful Dream" (11378), Gennett 5123, and "Blue Grass Blues" (11379) -- "There's No Gal Like My Gal" (11377), Gennett 5157.

The composers listed on the labels are Snyder, Black, Schoebel and Meyers. For commercial tunes, Hammond writes, the sides really kick; and after checking with the Gennetts by the New Orleans Rhythm Kings, he's inclined to think that the clarinet in Leon Rappolo, and the trumpet Paul Mares. (On one of the sides there are two clarinets.)

Orin Blackstone, who owns a copy of the Gennett 5157, writes of that disc that the clarinet is especially good, and might possibly be Rappolo; also that the trumpet might be Paul Mares. There's no suggestion that George Brunies was among those present, nor does the ensemble sound exactly like the New Orleans Rhythm Kings, he adds.

Since these four sides, according to their master numbers, were made not long after the N. O. R. K. "Maple Leaf Rag" (11358) session, it seems hardly likely that they could have been made by the Kings using a pseudonym. On the other hand, it is quite possible that the band was playing in the vicinity of Richmond at the time, and that some of its members might have played on the date. Also judging by the master numbers, the Original Memphis Melody Boys made their records immediately before the first Gennett session by King Oliver's Jazz Band, which William Russell's discography of Louis Armstrong has dated April, 1923.

Anyone who owns copies of these records, or who has information about them, is invited to send us his story - or his opinion.

Orin Blackstone also confirms our opinion that the clarinet in Dixon's Jazz Maniacs is Vance Dixon, whose name appears in full as composer of one of the sides. The records are "D A D Blues --- Tiger Rag", Paramount 12405, and "My Man Just Wont Dont -- Crazy Quilt", Paramount 12446. Dixon plays both clarinet and alto sax, with accompaniment by piano and banjo. Blackstone suggests that there may be other titles by Dixon on Paramount or perhaps Broadway.

* * *

Steve Smith of the Hot Record tells us that he played the Freddie Keppard "Stockyard Strut --- Salty Dog" (Paramount 12399) for Muggsy Spanier the other day. Muggsy told him that the disc, Keppard's best, nevertheless fell far short of indicating Keppard's ability. And he confirmed Smith's opinion that besides Keppard, the band featured Johnny and Baby Dodds, as well as Lil Hardin on piano.

The personnel of the Jelly Roll Morton "Someday Sweetheart -- London Blues", Okeh 8105, has been obtained by Campbell Holmes from Kid Ory. The men were George Mitchell, trumpet; Ory, trombone; Omer Simeon (?) clarinet; Jelly Roll, piano; Johnny St. Cyr, banjo; Andrew Hilaire, drums; John Lindsay, bass.

* * *

Bill Riddle of Baltimore has a Paramount by the Barrel House Five, number 12875, "Some Do And Some Don't" (1596) -- "Endurance Stomp" (1595), which he wants to identify. The Paramount master number 1595, according to Delaunay, belongs to Ida Cox's "Worried Man Blues" (No. 12085), a Lovie Austin accompaniment. We have checked the Barrel House Five number with Riddle, who sent us the record; is the number given for Lovie Austin incorrect?

Whether the masters coincide or are adjacent, the Barrel House Five is no Lovie Austin group. Both of the titles suggest Jimmy Blythe, and the band sounds definitely like one of Jimmy's washboard combinations. Besides Blythe, there's a fine alto-clarinet, and cornet who might possibly be Natty Dominique. Washboard completes the personnel.

Arnold G. Klein, also of Baltimore, has another Paramount by the Barrel House Five, "Scufflin' Blues -- It's Nobody's Business", number 12942, master numbers 1819 and 1820 respectively, which he has compared to Riddle's; and according to Bill, it is definitely by the same bunch. There's at least one other record under this name; who's got it?

On the subject of Jimmy Blythe's records: of course the Champions by Blythe's Blue Boys should not be listed, as they are in Discography, under Johnny Dodds. Whoever played clarinet on them, it wasn't Johnny. We have two of these discs at hand, and might as well publish some information on them. The masters are almost illegible, but "Pleasure Mad" (13688), on Champion 40025, "Tack It Down" (13691) -- "Some Do And Some Don't" (13690), No. 40062, are evidently from a different session than "Endurance Stomp" (14065) which is coupled with "Pleasure Mad". "Endurance Stomp" has only four men: Blythe on piano, washboard, clarinet and sax. The other three sides have one man playing both sax and clarinet, and a trumpet (Dominique) is added. Someone might supply the information on the other Blythe Champion; and, incidentally, the names of the reed men.

The State Street Ramblers, also on Champion, was a later and inferior Blythe group, including piano, banjo, washboard, trombone, kazoo, and sax-clarinet. Only one of these is at hand: "South African Blues--Sic 'Em Tige", Champion 40070, masters 17625 and 17627.

Bill Riddle also sent us a Romeo blues record, "I'm Saving It All For You" (12219) -- "Papa If You Can't Do Better" (12220), by Viola McCoy, with accompaniment by an excellent piano and surprising cornet whom we can't identify. Have any of Jazz Information's other readers run across this disc? Romeo 302.

And Riddle adds to Discography: the Lizzie Miles "I Hate A Man Like You -- Don't Tell Me Nothin' 'Bout My Man", compositions and piano accompaniment by Jelly Roll Morton, Victor V-38571.

* * *

A number of correspondents have sent us corrections of two wrong identifications in Mr. Baker's letter printed in last week's column. Brian Lawrance and His Quartet, on Champion 40034, "Ain't She Sweet" -- "Somebody Stole My Gal", was an English combination. Harold Lowey of Hartford, Connecticut, gives the personnel as: Brian Lawrance, violin and vocals; Frank Gregori, accordion; Jim Easton, baritone sax; Harold Hood, piano; Mark Sheridan, guitar; Harry Wilson, bass.

Harry Behnke of Brooklyn, N.Y., also lists a number of other Brian Lawrance records on Champion, all repressed from English masters. By the quartet, there are "Singin' In The Rain -- Shine", Champion 40046; "Tiger Rag -- Dinah", 40058; and by a sextet, "Everybody Loves My Baby --Miss Annabelle Lee", 40095, "I'll Take The South--China Boy", 40114; and "Broken Doll -- If You Were The Only Girl In The World", this one on Decca 1010.

Leonard Feather writes that the Billy Mason Orchestra's record of "Don't Be Angry -- If You Knew Su-

sie", Champion 40035(also mentioned by Mr. Baker) was made by a British pick-up band featuring Mason, a Scottish pianist, Duncan Whyte on trumpet and Buddy Featherstonehaugh on tenor sax. Others in the group were David Shand, alto and clarinet; Alan Ferguson, guitar; George Elrick, drums; and Bill Busby, guitar. Behnke adds the information that the same band also made "My Mammy -- Paradise", issued on Decca under the erroneous name, Billy Merrin and his Serenaders.

* * *

The records of Walter Barnes and his Royal Creolians, mentioned in the December 8 Jazz Information, were listed in "Rhythm On Record". Personnel of the band, as given by Schleman, included: George Thigpen, Leon Scott, Edward Burke, trumpets; William Bradley, trombone; Walter Barnes, Irby Gage, Wilson Underwood, Lucius Wilson, reeds; Paul Johnson, piano; Richard Bates, banjo; Louis Thompsen, bass; Bill Winston, drums.

Besides "It's Tight Like That", on Brunswick 4244, this band recorded "If You're Thinking Of Me--Birmingham Bertha", Brunswick 4480; "Buffalo Rhythm -- Third Rail", 7072; "How Long Blues -- My Kinda Love", 4187; and "Beau Koo Jack, number not given.

* * *

Carl Kraft, of Portsmouth, Virginia, adds some Whoopee Makers information. "Pa's Old Hat" (2170), under the name of The Dixie Jazz Band on Oriole 1536, seems to have been made at the same date as the Oriole "Makin' Friends". Under the same pseudonym he has "St. Louis Blues" (2109), on Oriole 1690; not the same as the "St. Louis Blues" issued on Cameo, Perfect and Pathe, but much better, except for a bad vocal.

He also has "Aunt Hagar's Blues -- Shake It And Break It", played by the Connorized Jazz Hounds, on Connorized dance record 3011, which may be identical with the Fletcher Henderson Black Swan 2034.

"Forty And Tight -- Piggly Wiggly" by the Beale Street Washboard Band on Vocalion 1403, he thinks is one of the Jimmy Blythe washboard groups, featuring Johnny Dodds and probably Natty Dominique. "Minnie The Moocher" (10590) -- "Stardust" (10589) by the Blue Ribbon Boys on Banner 32166, he identifies as the Mills Blue Rhythm Band. Kraft also has the Diva pressing of the Dixie Stompers' "Black Maria -- Baltimore", number 2526-G.

By way of conclusion, Mr. Kraft says that one of his favorite choruses is the improvisation of Louis Armstrong, Earl Hines and Jimmy Noone between the vocals of "You're A Real Sweetheart" by Lillie Delk Christian, Okeh 8607 --"an unforgettable chorus and an ungodly vocal".

* * *

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JAZZMEN ABROAD

by WALTER E. SCHAAP

PART FOUR

Our last two installments dealt with American stars who spent their time in Europe leading their own combinations. Here we shall consider a group of Negro musicians who have become more fully integrated into the continental jazz scene. Most of these were veritable missionaries of jazz, preaching the new musical doctrine from the platforms of hundreds of cafes and "dancings" scattered throughout every country in Europe. For the most part, their solid bourgeois audience was horrified by what seemed to them raucous cacaphony. Many of the musicians finally succumbed, and deserted hot music for the waltzes, tangos and rhumbas that the public demanded.

Others stuck it out, buoyed by the admiration shining in the eyes of a few rebellious students or of certain European musicians who were impressed by this new music, and by the evident joy with which it imbued its performers. One such was Arthur Briggs, who has already entered our story as a member of Noble Sissle's Orchestra. God alone knows how many countries Briggs has played in; it is doubtful if he himself can remember them all--and besides, some of them are no longer countries. Briggs gained a tremendous reputation abroad, and while he hardly rates "second to Louis", as has often been claimed, he does show a remarkable resemblance, at times, to the great Armstrong. Usually, Briggs is leading a small mixed band of his own in some obscure spot, but most of his recordings have been made as featured soloist in some better known band. Together with Coleman Hawkins, he played on a few sides by Michel Warlop's orchestra, made in Paris, 1935. A few months later he was featured in the H. C. F. Quintette's record of "Avalon" (recently reissued here on Royale). Some of his recordings, however, were made while he was working regularly with Noble Sissle's and Freddy Johnson's orchestras. His solo on Johnson's "Sweet Georgia Brown" (made for French Brunswick in 1933) is probably the peak of his recorded career, and can stand comparison with the work of the greatest trumpets. With Johnson on piano, he also waxed a few solos about this time.

Bobby Martin, who recently returned to this country, has had a somewhat similar career. Martin was featured in Sam Wooding's colored combination, which toured Europe way back in the twenties. He also played with Willy Lewis' aggregation at the time Benny Carter went over to join it.

A greater trumpet, however, than either of these, to my way of thinking, is Bill Coleman. Bill's style, his sharp, clear tone, remind one of a strangely sensitive Henry Allen; and, indeed, the two played side by side with both Luis Russell and Don Redman. Coleman's first recorded solo was on the Cecil Scott "Lawd, Lawd", recently reissued by Bluebird. Going abroad with Lucky Millinder in 1933, Bill soon returned to the United States, where he was featured on a few Fats Waller discs. But after a year or so, he yielded again to the urge for travel; and this time he visited France only as a stepping-stone to such exotic places as Bombay and Cairo. As far as we know, he is still in Egypt. Much of the time, Coleman was lead trumpet with Willy Lewis. Other recordings abroad were with Garnet Clark in 1935 and with Dicky Wells and Alix Combelle in 1937. Under his own name he made a dozen sides or so with pick-up bands in France.

A fine reed man, Frank "Big Boy" Goodie has been abroad more years than you could shake a baton at. Goodie, strangely enough, really owes his nickname to his height; he stands well over six feet. A New Orleans boy, he still plays in the old style--and very well too. Generally he is featured on tenor sax, but he is also proficient on alto, clarinet, and trumpet. Big Boy has recorded with Noble Sissle, Freddy Johnson, Willy Lewis, and Bill Coleman. The Coleman recording of "Big Boy Blues", a Swing disc, has been reissued by Victor. Under his own name, Goodie demonstrates his versatility on two Ultraphone sides, "St. Louis Blues" and "I Found A New Baby" (Ul AP-1527).

Fletcher Allen, a fine arranger and sax man, played with Lloyd Scott back in 1927. In Europe, he worked for a while with Freddy Taylor, and later organized his own outfit. At Benny Carter's session for Swing, Allen played second alto, taking the solo in "Blue Light Blues". With his own band, Allen recorded "Swinging In Paris", "Fletcher's Stomp" (Swing 29), and "What'll I Do (Swing 36).

Several rhythm men who participated in historic recordings have been knocking about Europe for the past several years. Both June Coles and Kaiser Marshall, bass and drums respectively with the old Fletcher Henderson outfit, found their way to the other side. Coles played for some time with Willy Lewis and also recorded with Garnet Clark. As far as I know, Marshall kept out of recording studios while abroad; he returned some time ago, and is now with Edgar Hayes' band. Another old-timer, Tommy Benford, known for his work with Jelly Roll Morton, was playing this year with Willy Lewis. Tommy handled the traps on Coleman Hawkins' All-Star Jam Band date. Wilson Myers, bassist for the New Orleans Feetwarmers, recorded abroad with Eddie South, Bill Coleman, and Alix Combelle. Unlike most bassists, Myers prefers to use the bow on his bass fiddle. It's really terrific to watch him bowing out fantastic breaks, his body doing contortionist's tricks, while his face remains solemn as a preacher's.

But the number of pianists who played abroad is even more impressive. One reason for this is that the European "boite" works on a limited budget, and the piano is the most satisfactory solo instrument. Garland Wilson, for example, became a standard fixture at "Le Boeuf sur le Toit". Wilson is a wonderful pianist, in the direct line of Fats Waller; while his style, not purely hot, is overburdened with changes of tempo and the like, his touch is superb. He has recorded a whole string of solos for English Parlophone and Brunswick, French Brunswick, and Swing, also participating in a Danny Polo session.

Freddy Johnson has been away for over ten years now, long enough to learn Dutch (which is no mean feat). He is primarily a band pianist and arranger, and will readily admit that he can't play solos. His 1933 band in Paris might well be considered the best colored outfit ever assembled outside the U.S. Not many records made around that time can surpass his "Sweet Georgia Brown". Later Johnson drifted to Holland, recording with Lex van Spall's Orchestra, Benny Carter, and Coleman Hawkins' Trio. During the fall of 1937 and 1938, he played together with the Hawk in Amsterdam.

A very talented pianist was the unfortunate Garnet Clark. Clark waxed two sides with an Alex Hill band before leaving the States. In Europe, he recorded a solo of "I Got Rhythm", and three sides with a small but choice band, for French Gramophone. Clark came to a tragic end, in an asylum.

Herman Chittison of Willy Lewis' Orchestra has the reputation of being the best pianist on the Continent for the last few years. For example, Freddy Johnson refused to take any solos at a Hot Club of France concert last spring, saying "Hell, I'm no Chittison." Chittison has recorded any number of solos for French Brunswick, and a few sides for the Swing label. When Armstrong came to France in 1934, Chittison was in the band that recorded with him. Chittison has also recorded with Willy Lewis, Eddie Brunner, and Bill Coleman; together with Coleman and Fletcher Allen, he left Lewis at the beginning of the year, to play in Egypt.

Teddy Weatherford, the almost legendary pianist who played with Armstrong in Erskine Tate's orchestra back in the days when New Or-

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NEW RECORDS

ART HODES (Solo Art 12007) South Side Shuffle — Ross Tavern Boogie.

The first Solo Art release of a white pianist's work is also first in two other ways. It's Art Hodes' first solo recording; and, in our opinion, the first good boogie-woogie ever recorded by a white pianist.

This isn't the powerhouse blues that a man like Pete Johnson plays when he sits down at the piano and begins to take it apart. It's more like Pine Top's, the drive coming from the rhythm of one hand against the other, with a light, precise, steady bass and the right hand's sharp, pounding figures. A white man playing Pine Top's music might sound academic, unless he had approached it in the right way — absorbing the feeling and the technique at once, with the deep background of the blues behind him. Art Hodes did that, and that's why his boogie woogie isn't dry, dull, or mechanical, but sensitive, full of imaginative music and a light, driving swing. Besides Pine Top, another old-timer can be caught in Hodes' playing: James P. Johnson, whose characteristic melodies have been absorbed into Art's blues. Again, this isn't synthetic; and the result is a truly beautiful blues record.

We might add, since Hodes has done so little recording, that for him, the Ross Tavern Boogie is only good. His next record, when he makes it, is going to be even better. The South Side Shuffle -- not a shuffle -- is somewhat less vigorous blues than the coupling, yet no less authentic and original. Credit Art Hodes, not only for going beyond "legitimate" jazz piano to learn the blues language — others have done that -- but for understanding the language, and having something to say in it. Credit Dan Qualey, again, for uncovering one of the fine talents of jazz, and preserving a little of it on wax.

MUGGSY SPANIER'S Ragtime Band (BB 10518) Livery Stable Blues--At The Jazz Band Ball. Muggsy Spanier, cornet; George Brunies, trombone; Rod Cless, clarinet; Bernie Billings, tenor sax; Joe Bushkin, piano; Bob Casey, bass; Don Carter, drums.

Two more sensational Dixieland sides from Muggsy Spanier. These are from the Dipper Mouth - Sister Kate session, and are no less exciting. Muggsy, Cless and Brunies form an inspired, solid ensemble, full of color and movement, very much at home with these old favorite tunes.

The Jazz Band Ball is a beautiful number, full of ringing sound and built for swing. The solos sail out of the ensemble and into each other with increasing excitement. Rod Cless' solo is his best recorded work, with the exception of Dipper Mouth. Joe Bushkin backs him admirably, coming out to fill a hole with two chords that double the tension — then bites into his own solo with the intense attack he's been displaying recently. Bushkin seems to improve with each new record he makes.

Bob Casey, whose rhythm work is excellent throughout, plays a good

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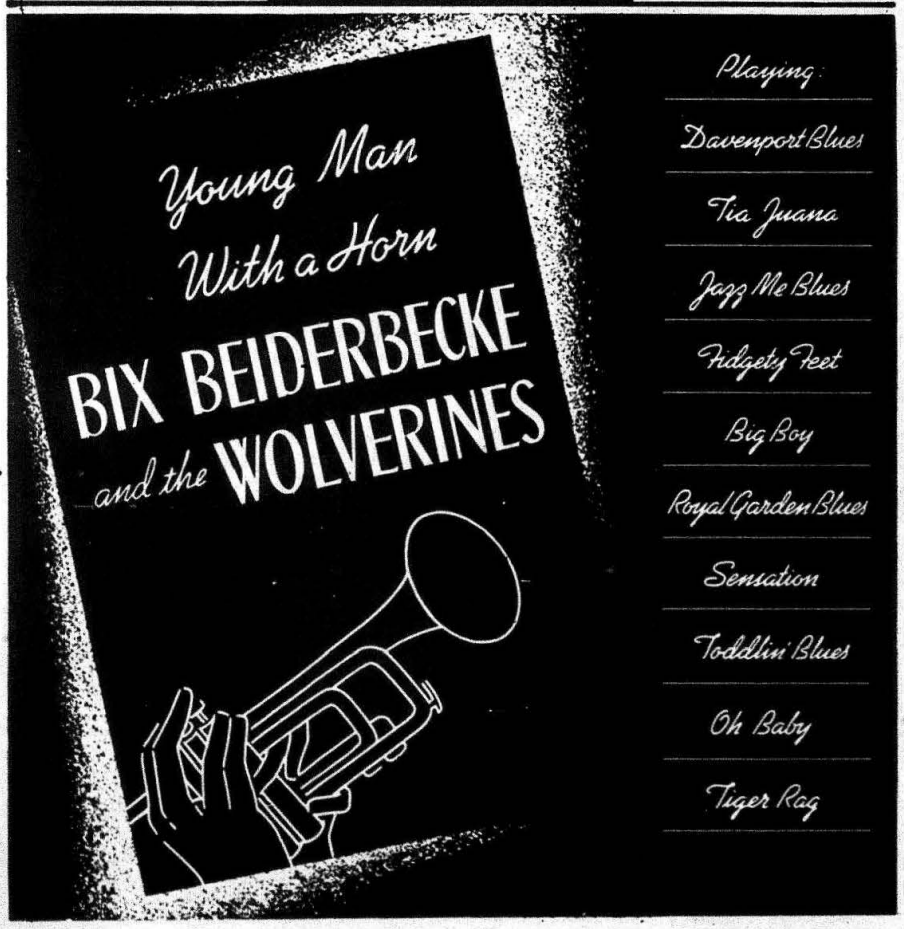
H. R. S.

PRESENTS AN ALBUM



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827 SEVENTH AVENUE NEW YORK CITY

NEW RECORDS

(Continued from Page 5)

bass solo which nevertheless slows down the music a little; as what bass solo wouldn't? Then Muggsy comes in for an admirably simple solo and carries into the final ensemble, which is no less exciting. Don Carter's drumming is firm and restrained, although he unfortunately fails to hold the tempo.

In spite of some fine kicks the Livery Stable Blues is much less good, mainly because the tenor solo is very inadequate. The tune is played in pleasantly reminiscent manner, down to the barnyard noises supplied by the cornet. Muggsy's work in the ensembles is great, and Gless fills in very satisfactorily. If you think he's too far off the chord in that ensemble, listen again; we don't. Brunies, settling down after his Sister Kate escapade, plays a good background.

PINE TOP SMITH, Jump Steady Blues; and MONTANA TAYLOR, Indiana Avenue Stomp (U. H. C. A. 65-66).

At the beginning of this new reissue a voice (Mayo Williams?) is heard saying "Hello, Pine Top, what 're you doin', sittin' around here with your head hung down, lookin' so sad?" And Pine Top answers, "I was just thinkin' about all these piano players goin' around here, makin' big money playin' on these here records." "So why don't you play on some of these records?" "That's a good idea, boy, I believe I start rehearsin' right now."

Then Pine Top's right hand hits the chords, the bass starts to walk, and you're listening to Pine Top's only recorded piano solo, besides the great Boogie Woogie. The Jump Steady hasn't all the delicately controlled drive, the simplicity and perfect unity of Pine Top's Boogie Woogie. It moves much more in the field of traditional melody, and in that field makes almost as enjoyable, if not as significant, a contribution. Some of the beautiful phrases from Jump Steady have found their way into Jess Stacy's style, incidentally; and if we remember correctly, are used in his new solo, Ec-Stacy.

Montana Taylor, another of the Chicago blues pianists, made the mistake of simply disappearing in an unspectacular way; and he has received much less publicity than Pine Top. But even though neither this new reissue nor his other solo, Detroit Rocks (reissued by the H.R.S.), has the fascination of Pine-Top's Boogie Woogie, Indiana Avenue Stomp is more interesting, as boogie woogie, than Jump Steady Blues. Taylor has a solid, interestingly varied bass, considerable facility in counter-rhythms, and a strongly melodic right hand.

These solos were originally recorded for Vocalion in 1928-29, and have been dubbed by the Commodore for this reissue.

DUKE ELLINGTON'S Orchestra (Co 35-310) Grievin'--Tootin' Through The Roof. Wallace Jones, Rex Stewart, Cootie Williams, trumpets; Lawrence Brown, Juan Tizol, Joe Nanton, trombones; Otto Hardwick, Johnny Hodges, Barney Bigard, Harry Carney, reeds; Duke Ellington, piano; Freddy Guy, guitar; Billy Taylor, bass; Sonny Greer, drums.

Two characteristic and pleasing Ellington originals. Tootin' is all jive, from the Duke's witty piano introduction to the screechy end, with special credits to Harry Carney for his fluent, full toned baritone and to Hodges for some elegant alto work. The main feature of the side, however, is a rapid-fire exchange of trumpet phrases between Rex and Cootie — an idea which the Duke tried, in a different form, several years ago with "In A Jam". Each of the trumpets plays a phrase in turn, picking up and answering the other, until they're tooting together. Cootie and Rex sometimes play very much like each other today, and the sympathy between them makes the natural differences of tone and temperament all the more interesting.

Grievin' is the melancholy side of Ellington, featuring Hodges at some length.

JESS STACY and his Orchestra (Varsity 8121) Breeze. Billy Butterfield, trumpet; Les Jenkins, trombone; Irving Fazola, clarinet; Eddie Miller, tenor sax; Jess Stacy, piano; Sid Weiss, bass; Don Carter, drums.

For his second Varsity recording date Jess Stacy kept the same band, only omitting the guitar and using Fazola on clarinet instead of Hank D'Amico. Two masters of "Breeze", at different tempos, were made; and the U. S. company has seen fit to issue both masters on one record, calling the faster side a fox trot and the slower one a blues — which it is most certainly not.

The idea isn't foolish, but it was unprofitable here, since both masters are much alike except that the faster one has more life. On both sides, the long chorus of the tune is played in harmony by trumpet, clarinet and tenor, with trombone obbligato; Stacy then takes a full solo chorus against Carter's cymbal, leading to a shorter clarinet solo and a jam ending. Neither piano chorus is particularly good, for Stacy. The slow side seems a little better on this point and for the ending.

Fazola plays beautiful clarinet on both sides, against conventionally scored backgrounds. Jenkins falters once or twice. This date must have produced better sides than either of these.

COLEMAN HAWKINS' Orchestra (BB 10-523) Body And Soul -- Fine Dinner. Tommy Lindsay, Joe Guy, trumpets; Earl Hardy, trombone; Jackie Fields, Eustis Moore, alto saxes; Coleman Hawkins, tenor sax; Gene Rodgers, piano; Oscar Smith, bass; Arthur Herbert, drums.

Coleman Hawkins' second record has been released, and again we are compelled to report that his improvisations on the slow tune are sterile and meaningless, and his tone on the fast side forced and unpleasant. In reply to Mr. Caughren, who criticized our stand on Hawkins in the December 8 number, we might observe that the point at issue is not the roughness of Hawkins' tone, but its quality. A tone can be rough -- like Pee Wee Russell's — without being strained. A good jazz tone on any wind instrument, we insist, must combine force with restraint in some degree of balance. The finest and hottest intonation comes when great power is firmly controlled. When the control slips, you have the kind of tenor Hawkins plays on Fine Dinner. And not only the tone fails, but the phrasing, which becomes stiff and a bit sloppy.

On Body And Soul the trouble is different. No forcing here, and the tone is immensely better, even if a little sentimental. But Hawkins plays almost entirely without inspiration; his variations are mechanically constructed, of cliches, and without much logic.

Hawkins' talent in his Henderson days was undeniably fine, and we don't doubt that he can do much better than the new records show. His present band is certainly uninspiring.

ETHEL WATERS with Eddie Mallory and his Orchestra (BB 10517) Baby, What Else Can I Do? — I Just Got A Letter. Eddie Mallory, trumpet; Tyree Glenn, trombone; Benny Carter, Castor McCord, reeds; Reginald Beane, piano; Danny Barker, guitar; Milton Hinton, bass.

Ethel Waters remains approximately her old self on the first side, which is a very pleasant pop tune. The second title, however, is not for here, and she shows it. The band is uninteresting; Carter plays a short alto solo on the second side.

HARRY JAMES' Orchestra (Co 35316) Avalon -- Ciribiribin. Harry James, Jack Palmer, Jack Schaeffer, Claude Bowen, trumpets; Dalton Rizzotti, Truett Jones, Bruce Squires, trombones; Dave Matthews, Drew Page, Claude Lakey, Bill Luther, saxes; Jack Gardner, piano; Mickey Scrima, drums; Thurman Teague, bass; Red Kent, guitar.

Columbia's first "Jazz Masterwork" is pretty inferior stuff. The second title, in fact, is a strictly commercial treatment. What little of James' horn is to be heard is not impressive. "Avalon" is ar-

ranged for the jitterbugs; Claude Lakey's tenor sounds as if He's been digging Coleman Hawkins' latest records, while James' lead and solo are nervous and windy.

ERNIE FIELDS' Orchestra (Vo 5240) You Gave Me Everything But Love -- I'm Living In A Great Big Way. The Southwestern colored bands of which Fields' is typical play their pops with much the same style and swing as their strictly hot numbers. Also in the Southwestern manner is their strong, heavy swing, the solos against riff background, ensemble passages of counter-phrases played by different sections; and their tendency to sacrifice precision to swing, if something must be sacrificed. There seems to be no great individual talent in the band however, and the arrangements are not very well integrated.

BENNY GOODMAN'S Orchestra (Co 35-308) That Lucky Fellow — Heaven In My Arms. We mention this commercial by way of indicating, to those who might be interested, that Mildred Bailey is now to be heard on Goodman's records, singing well against the band's smooth, competent backing.

JACK JENNEY'S Orchestra (Vo 5223) High Society — Moon Ray. We don't believe that "High Society" benefits by being arranged for modern ensemble style as if it had been written last month by a man in Radio City. Aside from its inappropriate nature the arrangement seems rather lacking in taste; and the solos are hardly better. Jenney's sweet trombone is heard to advantage on the Moon Ray side.

TOOTS MONDELLO'S Orchestra (Varsi-

(Continued on Page 8)

READERS' COMMENTS

Worcester, December 9

Gentlemen:

...Here in Worcester we have an unusually fine group of collectors. Most of the boys haven't been at it as long as I have, but their ears are excellent. In fact I believe as a general rule the younger collectors, once they are initiated, develop impeccable taste. The only reason I can find for this is that they have no sentimental attachment to records or the men who made them. I have been buying records since 1922 and many of the historic ones, while not the best jazz, made such a sensation when they were released that it is difficult not to remember this fact when discussing the merits of a performance.

I had a session last week with the chap I started collecting records with. We had not gotten together for at least ten years. Then I was all Armstrong and he was all Trumbauer and Bix. I put on several choice Chicago items, and they left him cold. He turned to me and said he hadn't bought anything since Bix died, what was the point? Yet his feeling for music up to that time had been extremely considered and tasteful. Even now he can analyze an artist's work as well as anyone I know; but he refuses to progress beyond 1930.

This subject of sentiment leads me to my first criticism of anything you have printed. In a recent issue you reviewed the reissue of Bix's "I'll Be A Friend With Pleasure". Amongst musicians this record is regarded, although I don't believe it actually, to be the last record he made. To them and to me it typifies the real Bix: a friend to everyone, retiring and ready to do his share musically or otherwise when called upon, as he ably demonstrates in this recording. Don't blame Bix because the number is inferior, the fault lies with the Victor people for having him record such a tune. Im afraid your reviewer, whom I enjoy, stepped on a lot of toes when he pointed out truthfully that the record was not up to par. That number will remain in the hearts of all musicians as Bix's last, and one that it packed with sentiment. It would have been in better taste for your reviewer to have given this story, if he knew it, and said little about the recording except that it was commercial, with Bix his usual self at that time.

Merrill M. Hammond, Jr.

Mountain Lakes, N. J.
December 18

Gentlemen:

It's probably unnecessary to tell you how much your magazine means to any jazz fan. For most of us, it's really a dream come true. Just one little thing I'd like to caution you about, though.

Possibly aside from the Collect-

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BLUE NOTE PRESENTS

PIANO IMPROVISATION IN FOUR PARTS

FOLDER ALBUM #BN — 8/9 . . . 2 TWELVE INCH RECORDS $3.00

BLUE NOTE RECORDS
228 SEVENTH AVENUE
NEW YORK CITY

At last American music can boast of a rhapsody in blue that is authentic, not a hybrid concoction like Gershwin's effort. BLue Note Records has just released THE BLUES, a marvelous masterpiece by the great Meade "Lux" Lewis. Published in a special folder, it consists of four 12 inch sides representing 20 minutes of improvising, the longest and most pretentious solo piano recording in jazz history.

If there has been greater piano blues than this, I have never heard it. At no point does the music lag. Using the mood and technique employed on his recent Melancholy and Solitude, he at times seems ready to borrow certain phrases from those pieces, then suddenly changes into new and breathtaking melodic lines that sparkle in their originality. His right hand is by turn gay and sad; there are moments when delicate figures are about to fly to the stars only to have his sombre bass seize and anchor them firmly...

Meade Lux Lewis, playing the blues from his very soul, has set a standard on these four sides which will be the despair of most other artists... It is my honest belief that this is the greatest blues piano recording ever released, and Blue Note deserves sincere compliments for making this music available to the public. -- FRANK MARSHALL DAVIS, ASSOCIATED NEGRO PRESS.

There is not only exceptional quality in the ideas he invents; there is also an internal logic in their arrangement that indicates that, at bottom, all musical thinking has a kinship. If this is pure improvisation (and there seems no reason to doubt it) the pundits of jazz have a new field for research in these two double-sided twelve-inch records. Lewis performs his tone-poem with much intensity and, at times, even with passion. The recording is excellent. -- IRVING KOLODIN, NEW YORK SUN.

NEW RECORDS

(Continued from Page 7)

ty 8118) St. Louis Gal--Louisiana. Ziggy Elman, trumpet; Toots Mondello, Noni Bernardi, altos; Jerry Jerome, tenor; Claude Thornhill, piano; Carl Kress, guitar; Al Kendis, drums; Joe Swarzman, bass.

Two pleasant tunes are neatly carried off in Mondello's second Varsity record. Again the arrangements are uninspired and adequate, the solos by Thornhill, Jerome and Mondello quite listenable. No more than that.

JAMES DeBERRY and his Memphis Playboys (Vo 05247) Zugity Zugity Zomp -- Insane Jealous Blues. De Berry's Memphis blues band, which had not scored with its recent releases, finally does two sides which can be recommended, with reservations. Zomp is in the rather sloppy swing style they use on fast numbers, and features clarinet and growl trumpet. The coupling is a slower blues very well sung by DeBerry, with the clarinet and guitar outstanding in the accompaniment.

LITTLE BUDDY DOYLE (Vo 05246) Three Sixty Nine Blues--Sweet Man Blues. Another of the group of race performers recorded in Memphis for the Vocalion race list, Little Buddy sings a light and original blues, with a good background supplied by harmonica and guitars.

BLIND BOY FULLER (Vo 05218) Jivin' Big Bill Blues--Red's Got The Piccolo Blues. Still another Memphis singer, accompanied by guitar and harmonica on the first side, guitar and washboard on the second, contributes a very lively disc. The harmonica player has some extraordinary ideas.

ROOSEVELT SCOTT (Vo 05206) Black Gal Blues--Brown Skin Woman Swing. The first side is pretty good blues with an undistinguished accompaniment by piano, guitar and a vocal bass; but the coupling is awful.

HARLEM HAMFATS (Vo 05233) You Done Turned Salty On Me--Rockin' Myself To Sleep. The Hamfats' characteristic ensemble style is fairly well applied to these two blues numbers, with good vocals by Lil Allen. Solos are few and not noteworthy.

LEROY'S BUDDY, Bill Gaither (De 7668) Another Big Leg Woman --- Lazy Woman Blues. Bill Gaither sings a good blues about the conventional subjects: the lazy woman who won't help out her man, the big-leg women who drive him wild. His pianist plays a fine, relaxed blues.

HELEN PROCTOR (De 7666) Blues At Midnight -- Cheatin' On Me. An extraordinarily good blues singer in the "classic" blues tradition (Bessie's way), with an excellent accompaniment furnished by clarinet, trumpet, piano, bass and drums. The trumpeter, playing with not quite enough restraint, could easily be Henry Allen. The clarinetist is as inspired, but more tasteful. Coupling, although popular, is nicely done.

Chicago

(Continued from Page 1)

bought it. In six months he was wanted in many bands as guitarist; but he stuck to the violin.

Then he got married, and to support his family went to East St. Louis to work for two and a half years in a steel foundry. While he worked at the foundry he was jobbing with his violin. In 1927 he played steady at a joint in East St. Louis, just violin and piano. A lot of blues.

Okeh started him recording; but when Okeh folded with the nation, Lonnie lost his job and the savings of thirty years. He worked in a tire plant in Galesburg, and later went back to his old steel foundry job. Then he went to New York, laid off for two months, and began recording again. Then Erie, Pennsylvania, and on to Chicago.

Johnson's rather quiet off the stand, but very content when he has a guitar in his band. Full recognition of his ability has been long in coming; but once it comes, it will be lasting.

-- Donel O'Brien.

JAZZMEN ABROAD

(Continued from Page 4)

leans musicians were knockin' 'em dead in Chicago, exiled himself voluntarily to China and the East Indies. Visiting Paris in 1937, he recorded several solos for Swing.

In this part of our story also fits Joe Turner, who played with Armstrong back in 1930. So far as I know, his only other recordings are solos of "Liza" and "Cheek To Cheek", made for Ultraphone in 1936.

Europeans out to "chercher la femme", musically speaking, could hear quite a bit of American talent. For example, Valaida Snow, colored trumpet player, won herself a high reputation leading her own band in England and France. Una Mae Carlisle, the pretty little pianist, recorded with Danny Polo. And Adelaide Hall, the "Blackbirds" star, she of "Creole Love Call" fame, even had her own night club in Paris.

Any number of other musicians deserve a place in our story, but we lack information about them. We shall confine ourselves to mentioning that Johnny Dunn, famed trumpet of the early twenties, played with other American Negro musicians in the Plantation Orchestra, in the pit of the London "Blackbirds", in 1926.

READERS' COMMENTS

(Continued from Page 7)

ors Item column, the most important section of your magazine is the reviews of current records and reissues - and these reviews should be most carefully considered. To date, I have no particular squawks, but I do believe I detect in the attitude of your reviewer certain signs which call for a word of caution.

Your critic is obviously a stickler for the classic "collective improvisation" definition of jazz, which I'll agree is just about the best criterion of good hot music. That should not blind us to the fact that there has been plenty of good arranged jazz, though.

Now, I may be wrong about this, but I'll bet your reviewer greatly prefers such sides as those by Jelly Roll Morton or the New Orleans Feetwarmers to those made by the Five Pennies or Goodman's 1935 orchestra. But they are all good jazz, the best jazz, aren't they? Your slap at "Onyxisms" doesn't alter the fact that Pick-A-Rib or Effervescent Blues are mighty good jazz; though you rightly condemn most of the commercial swing of the name bands, it is still true that it's not beyond the power of a 14-piece combination to turn out a masterpiece of hot.

My point is that your critic must scrupulously avoid letting personal prejudices (or should I say preferences?) interfere with his duty to your readers. I would suggest that a 3-man board be assigned the reviewing job, each man with different tastes if possible. The high standard your magazine sets makes it an almost impossible job for one man.

Paul B. Sheatsley.

New York

(Continued from Page 1)

once more on piano. Johnny Guarnerius, former George Hall pianist, joined Benny Goodman; Fletcher Henderson will devote his time to arranging. Hank D'Amico will leave Himber to front his own band. Bob Zurke has four new men: Will Hutton, trumpet; Will Clifford and Ernie Caceres, saxes; and Al Seidel, drums.

Bob Crosby plays a week at the Stanley Theater, Pittsburgh, starting 27th; opens at Hotel New Yorker January 9. Goodman leaving for California in January. Harlan Leonard signed with Bluebird, and will cut his first sides soon. Tony Pastor, out of town with his band, signed with same company.

Calloway opens at 125th Street Apollo tonight for a week, followed by Jimmie Lunceford. Lucky Millinder at the Windsor Theater, Bronx, since yesterday.